

Submission
No 842

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE
FACILITIES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities

My name is _____, and I am 14 years old. I have lived my whole life in Tarago, and I want to tell you why building a waste incinerator here is a terrible idea. I might be young, but I understand enough to know that burning rubbish is a dirty old technology that the rest of the world is moving away from. Countries are closing down their incinerators because they realise how toxic and harmful they are to people, animals, and the environment. So why is the NSW Government even thinking about allowing one to be built in Tarago?

The company pushing for this is Veolia. They already run the waste facility at Woodlawn, just outside Tarago, and the truth is they haven't shown they can manage that properly. Veolia regularly breaches their licence conditions. The smell from their site can travel up to 20 kilometres. When I wait at the school bus stop in Tarago, I sometimes feel like I'm going to vomit because the stench is so strong. It's embarrassing when friends visit or when people drive through town and wrinkle their noses. That's what Tarago is known for now — the smell of rotting waste.

But it's not just the smell. Veolia's trucks leak rubbish and dirty water on the roads, and leachate — the toxic liquid that drains from waste — has leaked into local waterways. Everyone in Tarago knows this, and so does the NSW Government. Yet nothing is ever done about it. Veolia just keeps getting away with it, over and over again. If I broke the rules as many times as Veolia has, I'd be grounded for months or maybe even end up in trouble with the police. But instead of being punished, Veolia gets rewarded with new multimillion-dollar projects. That's not fair, and it makes people like me lose faith in the government.

If this incinerator goes ahead, what happens when Veolia breaks the rules again? Will the government finally step in? I doubt it. Once the incinerator is running, it'll be too late. Even if the pollution is bad or toxic ash starts contaminating the air, soil, or water, it's unlikely the government will ever shut it down. History shows that once these things are built, they keep operating no matter how much harm they cause.

Tarago is a small rural town. Most people here rely on rainwater tanks for drinking water. That means any pollution that settles on our roofs or in our air ends up in our water. Would you want your kids drinking water that's been contaminated by what comes out of an incinerator stack? I wouldn't. People in Sydney are protected from these facilities — they're banned there because they're too dangerous. So why is it okay to dump them on regional and rural communities like ours? It feels like our lives matter less just because we live outside the city.

Waste incineration isn't part of a real circular economy. Burning rubbish destroys resources instead of reusing or recycling them. It releases greenhouse gases, toxic chemicals, and micro-pollutants like dioxins that can cause cancer and other serious health problems. The future should be about better recycling, reducing waste, and creating safer, smarter technologies — not bringing back old, dirty ones that other countries have already learned to avoid.

I want to grow up in a clean, healthy place where people care about the environment and each other. I want Tarago to be known for its beautiful countryside and community spirit, not for being the dumping ground for the state's waste. Please listen to young people like me. We are the ones who will have to live with the consequences of these decisions long after you have moved on. Don't let Veolia build this toxic incinerator in Tarago. Protect our air, our water, and our future.